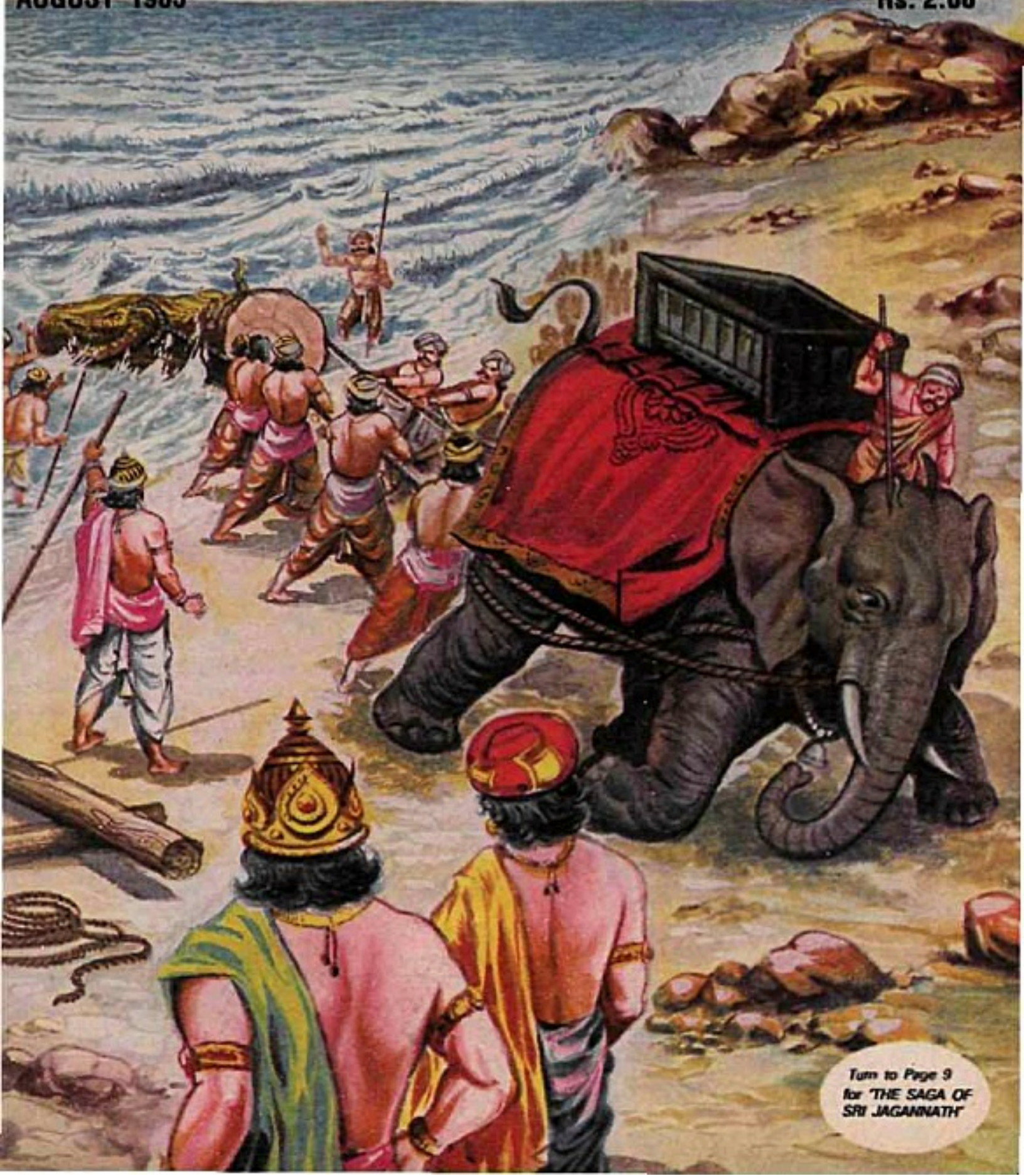


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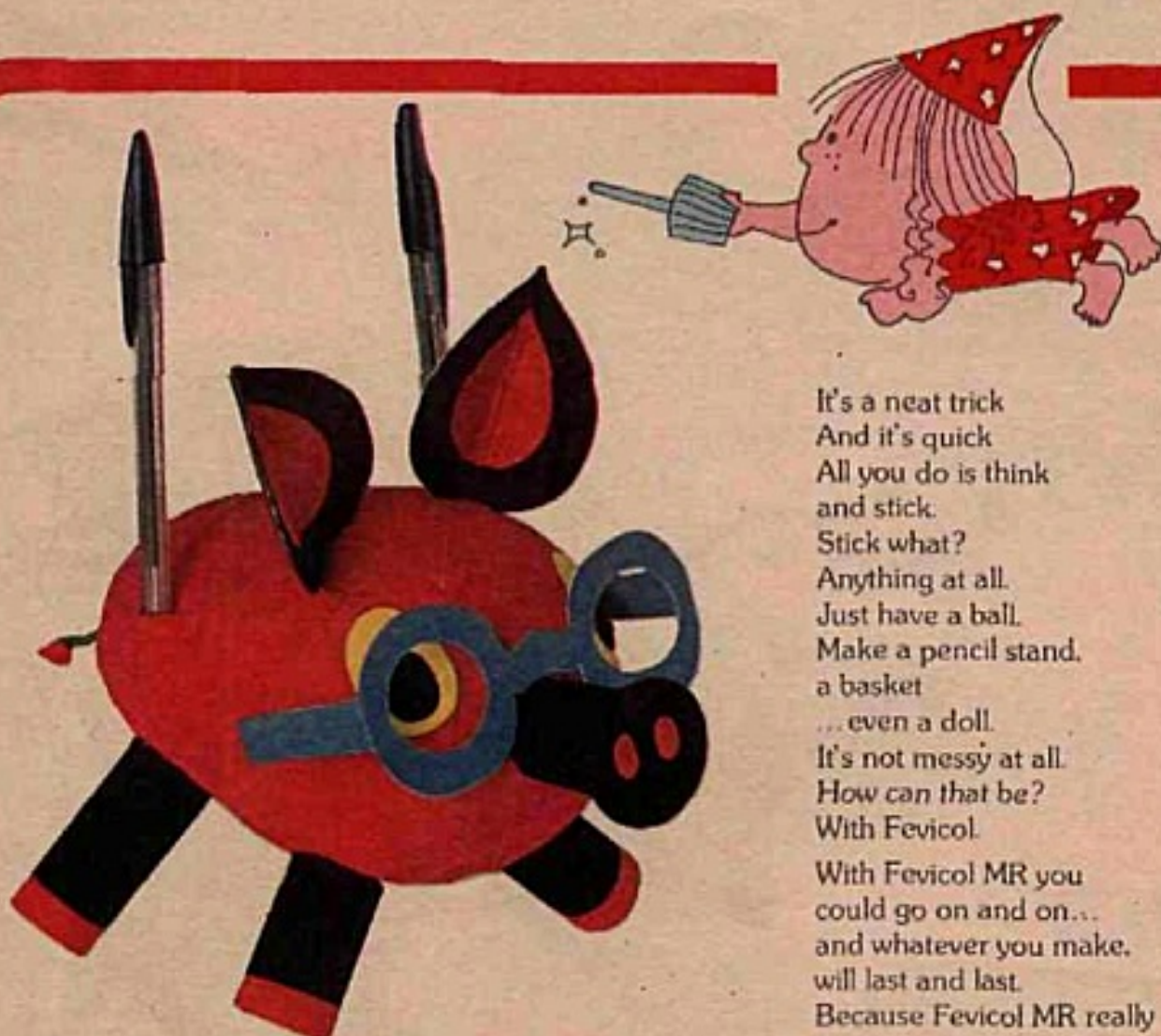
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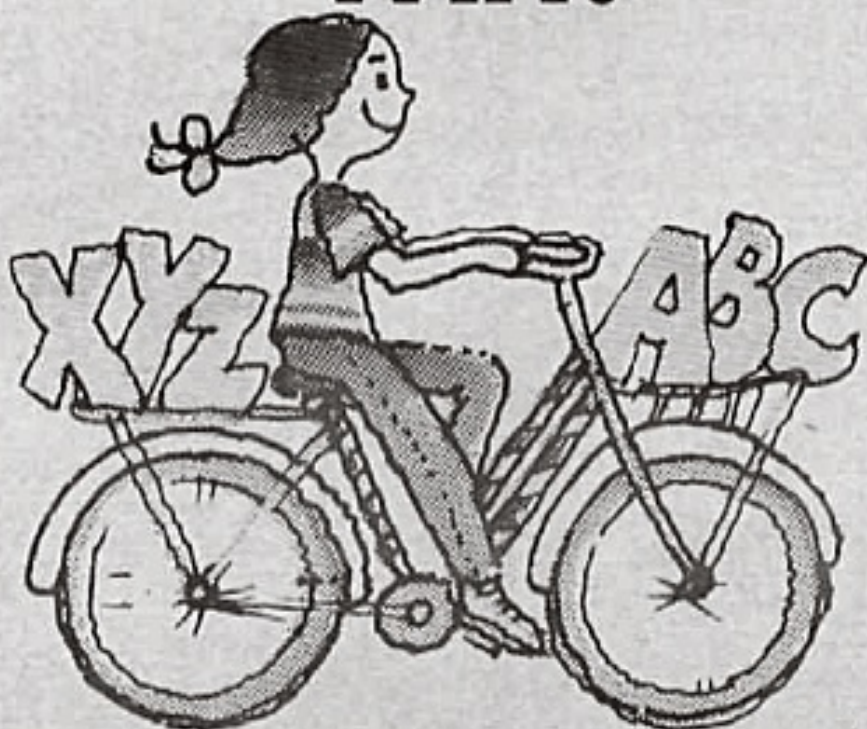


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- * **SHRINE OF MEENAKSHI:** *Story of the great temple of Madurai—through pictures.*
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Thoughts to be Treasured

Liberty never meant the licence to do anything at will.

—Mahatma Gandhi

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CHANDAMAMA

Controlling Editor: NAGI REDDI

Founder: CHAKRAPANI

USE OF FREEDOM

Many dishes are arranged on a table. They are enticing. I have the freedom to eat from any of the dishes.

But, while some of the items are delicious and nourishing, some are stale and some are even terribly poisonous.

I may have the freedom to taste any food, but if I do not have the knowledge to discriminate between the harmful food and the nourishing food, I am bound to find myself in danger.

So, freedom can be best put to use through knowledge.

Our education, our literature and our experiences are expected to impart such right knowledge to us. But none of them will do that unless we are eager to learn, unless we are sincere in learning.

How far do we fulfil this condition? We must find an honest answer to this question, within ourselves, on the occasion of the Independence Day. We will not be able to make the right use of our freedom otherwise. We must not swallow the poisonous food, simply because we have the freedom to do so.



लुब्धमर्थेन गृह्णीयात् स्तब्धमञ्जलिकर्मणा ।
मूर्खं चन्दानुरोधेन याथातथ्येन पण्डितम् ॥

Lubdharmarthena grhṇīyāt stabdhamañjalikarmaṇā

Mūrkham chandānurodhena yāthātathyena paṇḍitam.

A greedy fellow can be won over by money; a stubborn fellow through a show of humility; a fool through flattery; a wiseman through truthfulness.

— The Hitopadeshah



Fun means GoldSpotting



Specialty flavoured. Contains no fruit juice or fruit pulp.

Serve chilled



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NEWSFLASH



Cooler for the VIP

This year's summer was hardly felt by the inmates of the Delhi Zoo. While enclosures for small animals and birds were covered by thatches, the tigers were provided with fans. And the White Tigers? With air-coolers, of course!

Phone for the Deaf

A visual telephone for the deaf has been developed at Essex University, Britain. The system enables sign languages to be transmitted over the telephone lines, using stylized cartoon pictures.



Pre-historic Environment

200 km from Paris, in the area known as Morvan, a pre-historic park is coming up. Cardo Le Gitan, known to be an eccentric artist, is making gigantic sculptures of dinosaurs and other creatures which once frequented the earth. The figures are so life-like that horses and other animals on the neighbouring farms have got scared at their sight!



Jim's Pride

This picture, drawn after the photograph of Jim Mitchell of Newhall, California, shows the world's most impressive moustache today. It is 17 cm long and assiduously cultivated over the last five years.



The Saga Of SRI JAGANNATH

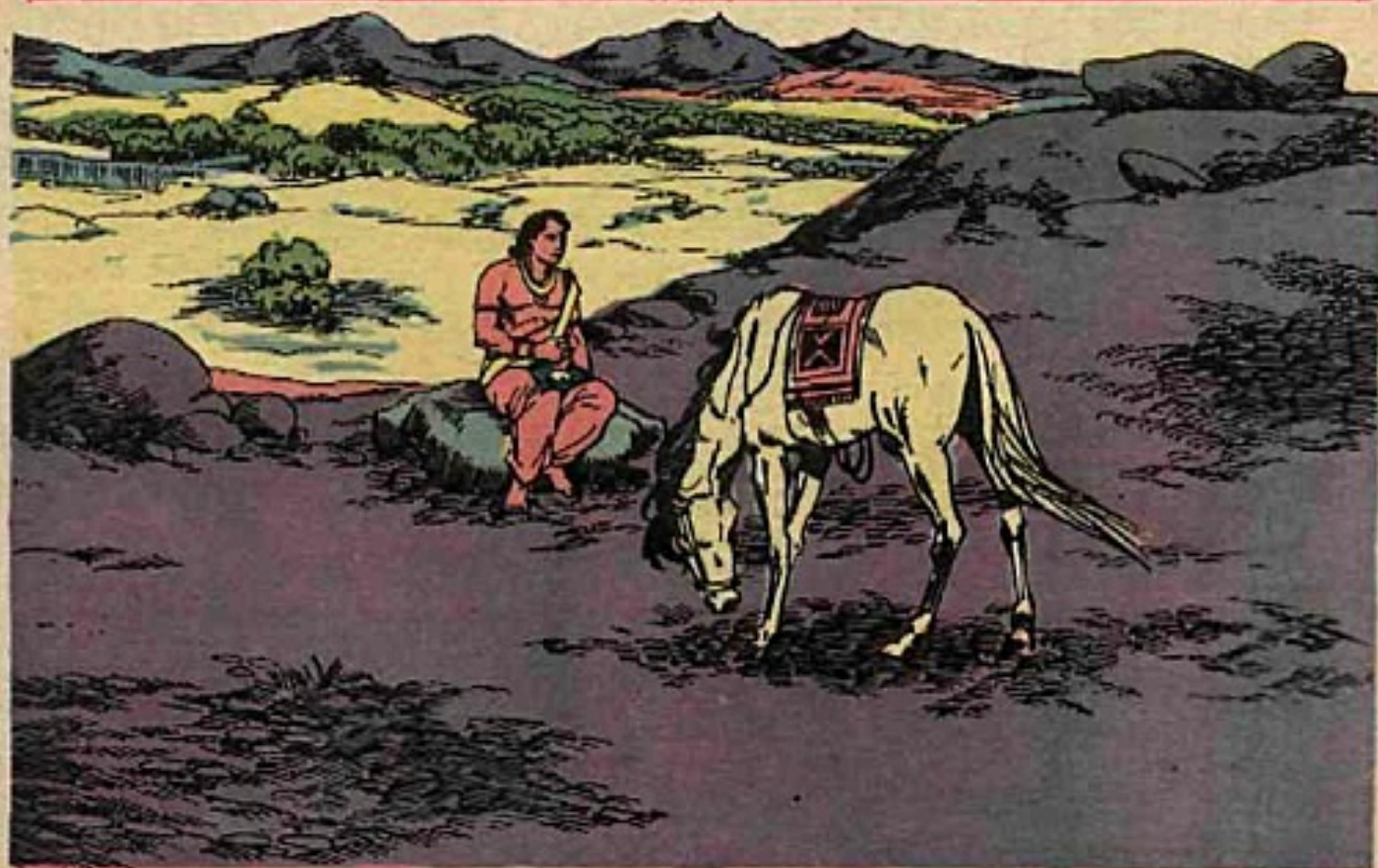
—By Manoj Das

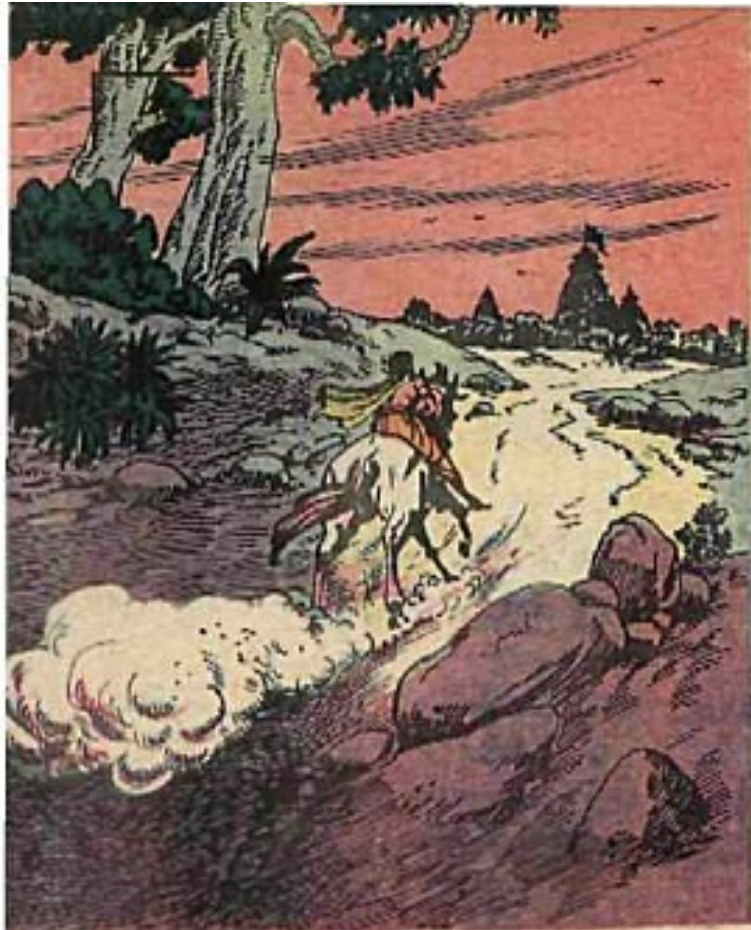
(Story so far: King Indradyumna built a majestic temple on the seashore at Puri. Vidyapati, among others, went out in search of some living Deity who could adorn the temple. Vidyapati met Lalita, the daughter of a tribal chief and married her. He saw that the chief, Visvvasu, worshipped a Deity in secret. One morning he stole the Deity and galloped away to Puri.)

Vidyapati crossed the forest in a few hours. Tired, he dismounted from his horse and ate the food Lalita had so lovingly packed for him. Visvvasu would not know of the theft until the next day. It is only when he would visit the cave at dawn, with a palmful of flowers,

that he would find his Deity gone! By that time Vidyapati should have safely reached his destination.

Vidyapati was happy that he had accomplished his mission. He was happy that he had come out of the dark forest into the plains flooded by sunlight.





But as soon as he looked at the forest he had left behind, his heart was overcast by a gloom. It is sure that he had accomplished his mission, but at what cost? Had he not betrayed the trust of the kind-hearted Visvasu and the innocent Lalita? Visvasu will no doubt be heart-broken. Can Lalita stand the shock of his betrayal and the anguish of her father?

"O God!" muttered Vidyapati, "I had to do what I have done. But, was not my act mean, treacherous and unpardonable? Only if this act serves some greater purpose, something ordained by Thou, I can

recover my peace."

He then remembered Visvasu and Lalita and silently begged of their pardon.

He hopped onto his horse and galloped forth, struggling with his gloom. Faster and faster he rode, as if thereby he could leave his tormenting thoughts behind!

By sundown he approached the charming town, Puri. Straight he went to the palace of Indradyumna. An official who had spotted him at distance had already rushed to the palace ahead of him to inform the king of his arrival. He knew how anxiously the king awaited him.

King Indradyumna came out hurriedly and embraced Vidyapati. "Young sage, not only your bright face, but also the dream I dreamt last night tells me that you have not returned empty-handed. You have brought the thing for which I have been waiting so eagerly—counting every moment and passing sleepless nights."

"My lord, I'm convinced that I've got the invaluable thing for which I set out, but..." Vidyapati's voice was choked.

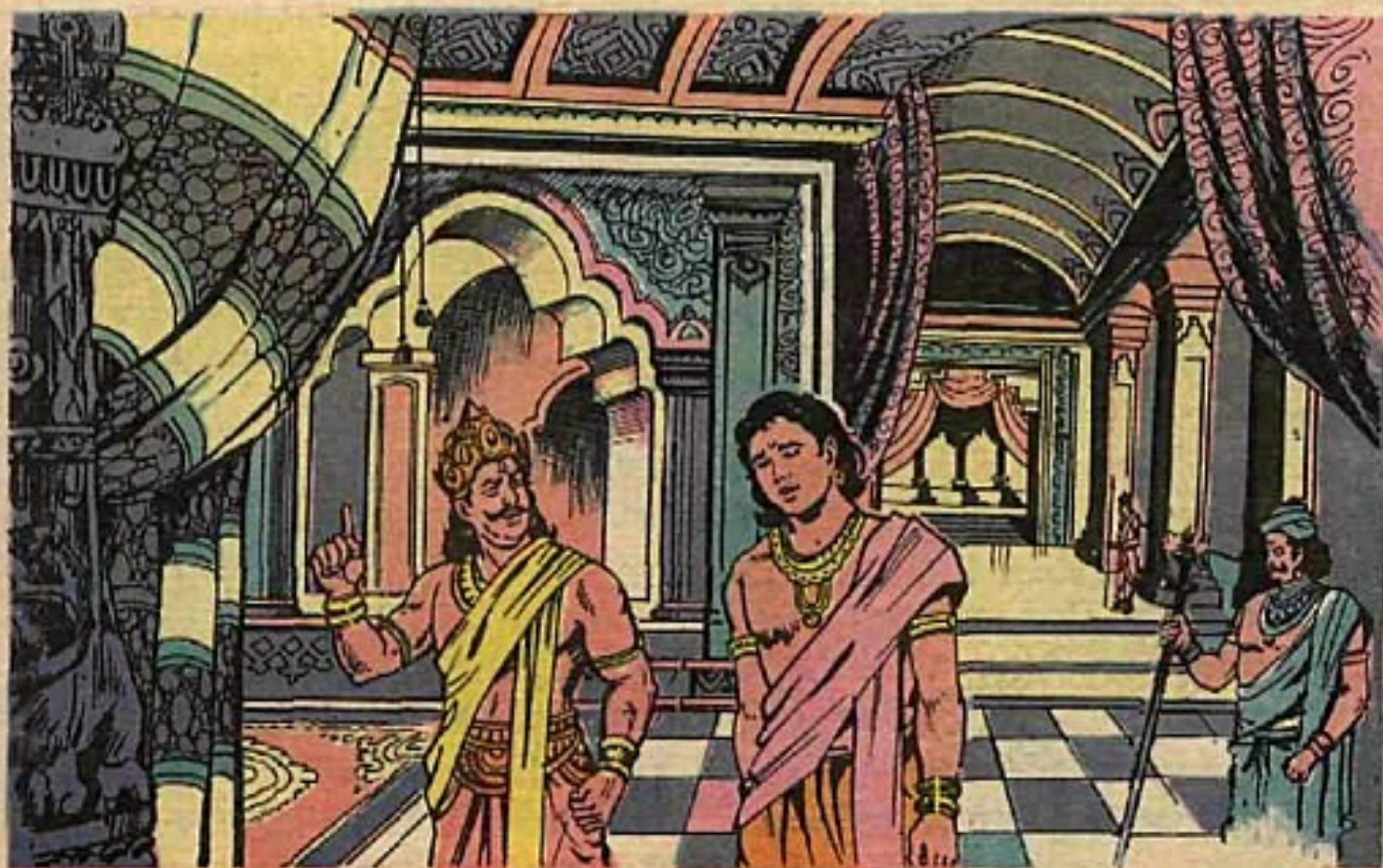
"Go on, my friend, I know

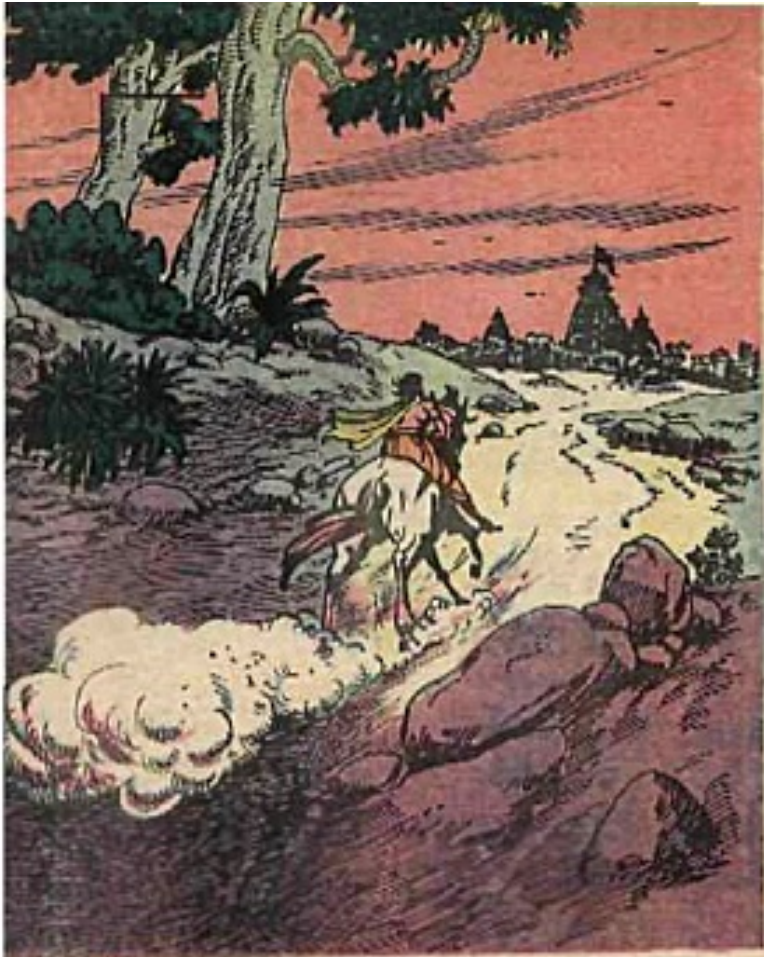
that no one can achieve anything really great without confronting some difficulty or obstacle. Let us hear your problem. We will do everything possible to resolve it," said the king in great earnest.

Vidyapati shook his head. "No, no, my lord, none can help me come out of my anguish. I had to steal the object of my quest, and that too from one who was my host, my benefactor and whose daughter I married. I betrayed the father and the daughter. I shudder at the thought of their shock when they shall come to know of my betrayal. That will be in the

morning."

"Vidyapati, you must root out such disturbing thoughts from your mind. Thousands of artisans have offered their labour to the building of the temple. We have offered our resources. Similarly, if someone has been obliged to lose something he valued, what is wrong in that? I am directed in my dream to await a log that will come floating in the sea by the morning. What you have brought is charged with the presence of Vishnu. Am I right? This is to be placed inside the image that will be carved out of the log. Once the image is installed in





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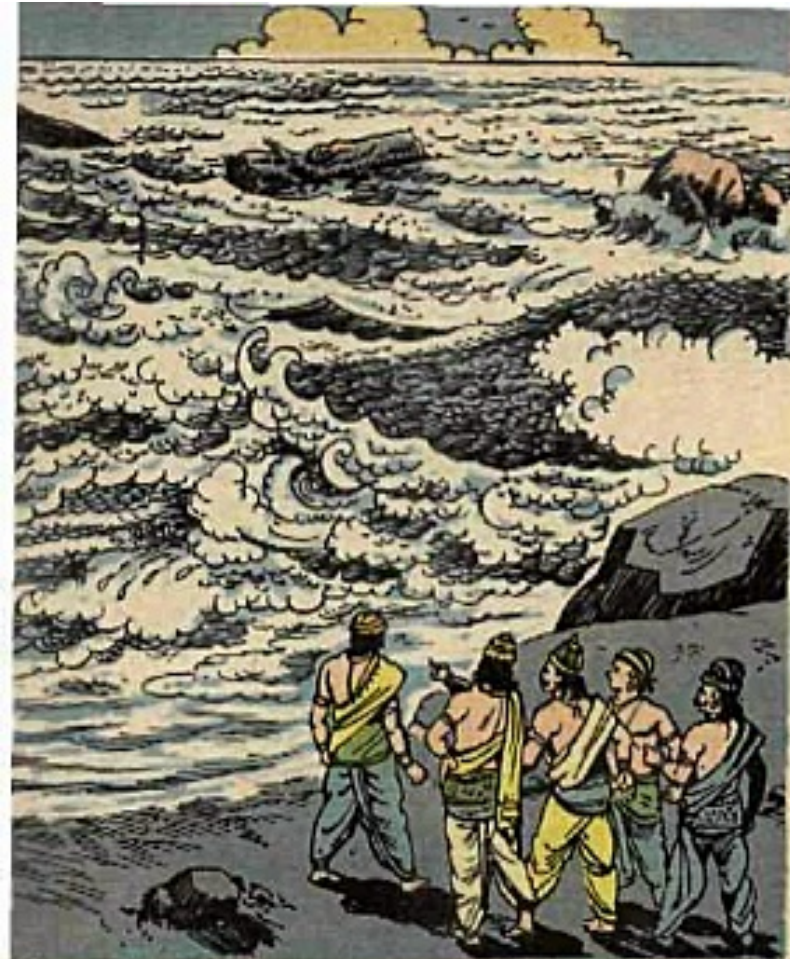
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"My lord, I'm convinced that I've got the invaluable thing for which I set out, but..." Vidyapati's voice was choked.

"Go on, my friend, I know



the magnificent temple, your host will be only too happy to see it," said the king, patting Vidyapati on the back.

Vidyapati felt consoled.

The king, his ministers and Vidyapati were all present on the seashore an hour before the dawn. A mild mist spread on the waters and it had dimmed the horizon.

By and by the eastern sky grew rosy. The king looked agog with excitement as if the sunrise was taking place for the first ever time!

The sun sprang up. The waves recorded a million golden ripples. The mist began to fade.

"There! There it is!!" cried out the excited king. "Can't you all see it rolling over the waves?"

A huge round log was seen rising with the surging waves and gliding down as the waves subsided. At the king pointing it out, a dozen waiting boats dashed into the sea.

They surrounded the dancing log. Men in the boats leaned towards it and began pushing it towards the shore. A floating log needed but a little push to move!

But the log would not move. Some of the surprised boatmen, expert swimmers, jumped into the waters and tried to move it, but in vain. The boats came closer and pressed against the log, but there was no change in the log's position.

The men then threw ropes around the log and pulled it towards the shore. When that yielded no result, more ropes were brought and fastened to it. Bigger boats were pressed to service, but the situation remained unchanged.

The king's face paled as time passed. The ministers were worried. Soldiers were summoned. They did their best to bring the

log ashore, but they failed.

"Whoever has heard of a floating log proving heavier than a hill!" said the king. "There is something wrong—not with the log, but with us. However, I'll not budge until the log has been brought ashore. I hope, it does not drift away!" said the king.

The day passed and the evening made way for the night.

Riding a golden palanquin came Queen Gundicha. "You don't mean to pass your night in the open!" she complained to her husband mildly.

"I don't really know what I am going to do!" answered the

king in a kind of daze. He closed his eyes.

It was a moonlit night. Soldiers and boatmen were still trying their strength against the strange log.

"Stop!" shouted the king suddenly. The ministers passed the order on to those struggling with the log. "I know why the log refuses to come," said the king. Then, looking at Vidyapati, he said, "Lead me to the blessed devotee who was the custodian of the sacred thing you've brought. His touch alone will move the log!"

—To Continue





WELL DONE!

One day Vasanti, said to her husband Sudhakar, the farmer, "It is quite unnecessary to have two cows. I suggest that you sell off any one of the cows. In any case we require some cash for spending during the festival season,"

Next day, Sudhakar set out with the cow. He reached the cattle market early morning and took shelter under a tree. Customers came by, asked the price of the cow, looked at it closely but no one was ready to buy it. In the evening Sudhakar was on his way back home, a little disappointed.

As he walked along, he met a man with a horse. He too hadn't been able to sell it off. So, both of them agreed to exchange their animals. Happily, they continued on their ways, Sudhakar now holding the reins of the

horse.

Soon, Sudhakar came across a man leading a goat. Meanwhile, he had realised the futility of having a horse. He exchanged the horse for the goat.

A little later, Sudhakar exchanged the goat for a duck from another person along the way.

In the same manner, the duck was exchanged for a hen.

As he continued his journey he suddenly felt very hungry. His house was still a long way to go. He decided to have his meals with a farmer and, for the food offered to him, he gave away the hen.

Thus, amused at his own adventure, Sudhakar returned to his village. As he neared his house, he met Robin a wealthy friend who asked, "Sudhakar, I hear you went to the cattle

market today—have you done good business?"

"No. In fact, I have returned empty-handed," replied the farmer. And he then narrated his day's adventures.

"What a bungling up you have done, Sudhakar!" exclaimed the friend. "Today you wife is sure to create a scene at home."

"Not at all," said Sudhakar. "My wife will never quarrel with me," he continued with confidence. "She will understand."

"I know how understanding and noble she is. Still, I can bet, today she will take you task for your stupid act," challenged the friend.

"I accept the bet. If my wife quarrels with me over this issue, I shall give you a hundred rupees," said Sudhakar.

"If I lose, I too shall give you one hundred rupees," said the friend.

"In that case come with me to my house, and be on the verandah and you can listen to our conversation," said Sudhakar.

As soon as Sudhakar reached home, his wife enquired, "How much money did the cow fetch?"

"I could not sell the cow, so I



exchanged it for a horse."

"Well done. We can buy a carriage from my savings and we can go about wherever we want. But, where is the horse?" asked Vasanti.

"Later, I exchanged the horse for a goat."

"That's is good. We can at least enjoy the milk of the goat. In any case, it would have been too expensive to maintain a horse. But, where is the goat?" asked Vasanti.

"I thought it better to exchange it for a duck."

"That's better. You have done a wise thing by doing so. But, where..."



THE MAGIC CONCH-SHELL

Prabhudas was a poor farmer. Once monsoon failed and he got no crop on his land. He borrowed some money from the village money-lender. Next year he had a good crop, but the whole thing was taken away by the money-lender against the loan he had given.

The shameless money-lender told Prabhudas, "You need not worry. You can borrow again!"

Prabhudas had no other go.

Next year, he forfeited his land to the money-lender. He wept. But the money-lender laughed and said, "Your name is Prabhudas, which means God's Servant. Why don't you ask Prabhu to provide for you?"

Prabhudas was growing almost mad with his misery. "That is what I'll do," he said and set out in search of Prabhu—the Lord!

He had two pieces of bread with him. He felt awfully hungry at noon. He had just opened the bread parcel when his eyes fell on an old man who looked famished.

"Come on, let us share the food," said Prabhudas and he handed over one bread to the stranger.

"Thanks. I had had no food for two days!" said the stranger, accepting the bread.

"For two days! Well, I have gone without food only for a day! You deserve all I have," said Prabhudas and he handed over to the stranger his second bread too.

"Where are you going?" asked the stranger.

"To meet Prabhu—the Lord."

"What for?"

"So that He will take away my

misery!"

"In that case, take this conch-shell. Blow it and ask it to take away anything. The thing will vanish. Remember! You cannot ask it to give you anything!" the stranger said, handing over a conch-shell to Prabhudas.

Prabhudas blew into the conch-shell and said, "I must go home, but take away the need for me to walk back all the way!"

Next moment he found himself inside his house.

"Take away my poverty!" he said. Next moment he had a trunkful of money.

This miraculous change in Prabhudas's life surprised the money-lender. He found out the mystery from him and at night stole his conch-shell.

But it did not work with the money-lender. It was because

he began asking it for things, while it was to take away things. He returned it to Prabhudas, but on oath made him tell the conch-shell that whatever is taken away from him, twice of it should be taken away from the money-lender."

An hour later, Prabhudas felt a bad itch in one of his eyes. "Take away this eye!" he said with annoyance. Instantly he lost one eye but, in the neighbourhood, the money-lender lost both his eyes!

The blind money-lender found his way to Prabhudas and implored him to cure him of his blindness.

Prabhudas told the conch-shell to take away the money-lender's blindness. The money-lender got back his vision. Never did he try to harass Prabhudas again.



Oliver Twist



Fagin sends Oliver with two other boys, to pick pockets. Innocent Oliver is caught by the police, and convicted, but is befriended by the old gentleman Mr. Brownlow who rescues him from prison in a coach.



The coach finally stopped before a neat house in a quiet, shady street. Here a bed was prepared for Oliver and he was tended with a kindness and solicitude that knew no bounds. But, for many days, Oliver remained insensible to all the goodness of his new friends.



The doctor came several times and professed himself satisfied with the young boy's progress. In due course Oliver sat up and took broth. Later, he was allowed to dress and go downwards. It was while Mr. Brownlow was looking over him that he looked at the picture above Oliver's head. The boy's face was a living copy of the picture.

Meanwhile, much had happened elsewhere. When Oliver had been arrested, the Dodger and his friend Charlie Bates had fled through narrow streets to Fagin's miserable room. "What's this?" Fagin said as a greeting. "Where's the third boy?" He seized the Dodger tightly by the collar. "Speak, or I'll throttle you."





"The police have got him," said the Dodger. "Now let go of me." Freeing himself, he snatched up a toasting fork and thrust it at Fagin's waistcoat. Stepping back, Fagin seized a pot which he hurled at the Dodger. The Dodger ducked and the pot shattered itself against the wall near the door, just as a man burst into the room.

"What are you up to you miserable old man," growled the man as he walked through the doorway, accompanied by a white, shaggy dog. "Ill-treating the boys again?" Fagin said: "You see me in great distress, Bill Sikes. We are in danger of being discovered."



Pressed for further details, the Dodger told them the circumstances in which Oliver had been arrested. "One thing is for certain," Sikes said, when he had finished, "that boy must be dealt with." Fagin replied, "But how, my dear, will we find him?"



This was a matter shortly to be solved. Oliver's recovery was rapid. And no sooner was he recovered than Mr. Brownlow caused a complete new suit, a new cap and a new pair of shoes to be provided for him. "Now you are well again," Mr. Brownlow said. "You must tell me everything about yourself. But first I would like you to go to the bookseller and give him the money I owe him."

"I won't be ten minutes, sir," Oliver said, putting the five pound note that Mr. Brownlow had given him, into his pocket. And making a respectful bow, he hurried off and in no time at all came near the bookshop, where, by a sad misfortune, he was seen by the Dodger.



The Dodger immediately hurried to Bill Sikes who was in a nearby beer shop. The two of them came out of the shop together and followed Oliver. Evening was setting in and seeing that the street was almost deserted, Sikes prepared for action.

Before Oliver could utter a single cry for help, Bill Sikes was upon him. Weak with recent illness, shocked by the suddenness of the attack, terrified by the growling of the dog, he was powerless to resist Sikes as he dragged him through a number of dark streets.



At length they turned into a filthy, narrow street, where Sikes stopped in front of a house in ruinous condition. Sikes knocked softly at the door, which opened silently, whereupon Sikes seized the terrified boy and pushed him inside, where Oliver found himself confronted by Charley Bates, a member of Fagin's gang of young pickpockets.



"Let's have a light" said Sikes. Charley Bates disappeared rapidly up the stairs and returned presently with a tallow candle stuck in the end of a cleft stick. Oliver was pushed roughly forward up the stairs and hustled into a room where a shadowy figure stood in the darkness.

A THIEF IN A STORMY NIGHT

"My lord! Here is a thief. This dare devil young man had the audacity to enter a nobleman's house last night during the rains. Luckily he was caught," the police officer told the Emir of Bassora.

The Emir looked at the youth with scorn. But his scorn soon changed into surprise. The young man looked dignified and intelligent.

"Did you enter the house in order to steal?" asked the Emir.

"Yes, my lord," replied the

young man calmly.

"Do you know what is the punishment for your crime? Your arms are to be chopped off!" said the Emir.

The young man nodded. It became clear that he had no desire to claim that he was innocent.

"All right, throw him in jail. Tomorrow he will receive the punishment," said the Emir. He had punished hundreds of culprits and criminals in his life. But he felt very unhappy with





this case. He did not want to punish the young man, but he had no other go. Law must take its course when the accused himself confesses to his crime!

At night the Emir strolled towards the prison. He heard an extremely sweet song coming from the prison. He advanced slowly and found out that the singer was none other than the young man waiting to be punished the next day.

The Emir ordered the young man to be brought before him. "My boy," he said when the prisoner was led to his presence, "even now there is time for you to escape the terrible punish-

ment. you have confessed to your crime before others. All you have to do is to withdraw your confession before all. Tomorrow you will be led to the park. But before giving orders for chopping off your hands, I will ask you if you had entered the house for some other reason. You can give some reason. I'll then suspend the punishment. People will soon forget about it and I will release you after some days. I say this because I cannot believe that you are a thief! Do you understand me?"

"I do understand you. You are very kind. Thank you, sir," said the young man. The Emir was happy. He was sure that the prisoner will do as advised by him.

It was the custom in those days to announce in the public when someone was to receive a major punishment. People gathered in the park to witness the punishment, particularly when the culprit was to lose his head or arms or eyes.

Almost the whole city of Bas-sora turned up at the park the next day, in the afternoon, hearing the announcement in the morning. The prisoner, his

hands bound and legs in fetters, was led up a platform on which the Emir and his officers were already present.

"Young man, did you enter the house for some purpose other than stealing? Did you have someone familiar to you in that house, with whom you had some urgent business?" the Emir asked loudly.

The prisoner cast a serene look at the silent multitude and then lowering his head, said, "No my lord, I had no other business in that house!"

There were waves of murmur from the crowd. People were full of pity for the young man who looked innocent and who

was of aristocratic bearing. Over that, his giving up the chance to claim innocence moved them to their hearts.

Only the Emir looked annoyed and grave. What a fool this young man was! He totally ignored his tutoring!!

"Let him forfeit his arms!" he gave the command. The executioner brandished his sword and advanced towards the prisoner.

Suddenly there was commotion in the crowd. A young lady was seen pushing her way forward. She climbed the platform at great speed and stood, in front of the prisoner, in order to protect him from the sword. "Chop off my hands if you must!





This young man has spoken a lie—at my behest and to safeguard my dignity!”

All were stunned. “Come down, my daughter, come down! Are you mad?” shouted an elderly man making his way towards the platform.

But the Emir signed the man to stop. He asked the young lady, “What have you to say, my daughter? Will you come out with the full story?”

Between her sobs the young lady narrated all that had happened. Years ago, when she and her parents lived in another town, they had a rich neighbour. The young man was their

son. The neighbours were so friendly that they had even thought of marrying her to the young man..

But the situation changed. The girl's parents shifted to Bassora. The young man's parents became so poor, there was no connection between the two families.

The young man was on a visit to Bassora. He was returning to his inn at night when a terrible storm broke out. He climbed the verandah of a house little knowing that it belonged to his old neighbours. Through the window the girl saw him. In frequent flashes of lightning she recognised him. He was drenched. She opened the door and gave him a towel to wipe his person. It was past midnight and all were asleep. The two talked for an hour. The girl informed the young man that her parents had decided to marry her off to a merchant's son. In fact, the merchant was lodged in that very house that night; he had come to finalise the arrangements for the wedding.

The young man asked jokingly, “What will happen if I am found inside your room at this hour?”

"Well, I have to cry that a thief had entered the house and you too have to declare yourself a thief for sake of my dignity!" replied the girl, also in joke.

It so happened that the girl's uncle saw the young man when he was leaving her room. "A thief, a thief!" he shouted. Soon the young man was chased and caught.

The girl's parents knew who the young man was. But they were afraid of identifying him. They did not wish their would-be son-in-law's father to suspect their daughter.

Tears drizzled in the Emir's eyes when he heard the story.

"Here is a brave young man, who would not let any suspicion be cast on an innocent girl even if he were to lose his arms! What an example of sacrifice! If I had a daughter I would have married her to this young man!" the Emir said.

The girl's father came upon the platform and greeted the Emir and said, "My lord, allow me to give my daughter in marriage to this young man. I feel ashamed for my conduct in refusing to recognise him."

The Emir smiled. The crowd applauded. The marriage took place under the loving supervision of the Emir himself.



THE ONLY PUZZLE

A thief of Bassora entered an orchard and plucked some pineapples. He put them in a sack and tied its mouth.



As he was going out, the owner of the orchard caught hold of him. "Why are you here?" he demanded. "A whirlwind brought me here," said the thief.



"Why did you pluck my fruit?" demanded the owner. "Whirlwind did it!" said the thief, feigning innocence.



"And who put them in the sack and tied it?" asked the owner. "How our thoughts are alike!" exclaimed the thief. "That is the question that puzzles me too!"



ANGARAKA THE TERRIBLE

Once upon a time there was a giant named Angaraka. He was brutal and merciless. He struck against castles and palaces and forcibly took away ladies to serve his household in a hilly area. The giant could assume the form of a wild boar.

Prince Mahasena of Ujjayini sat in meditation for long, praying to the Divine Mother for granting him strength.

His prayer was granted. He received a sword. He was told that if he could use his sword to protect the innocent from tyran-

ny of the strong, he will receive a splendid reward.

One day Prince Mahasena was out on a hunting expedition when his chariot faced a boar. The terrible boar charged against the chariot and the chariot was upturned.

The surprised Prince, who had jumped out of the chariot, began shooting arrows at the creature. To his great surprise he saw the arrows falling off the boar's body without making any dent on it!

The boar ran away. The fu-



rious prince followed it. After hours, it was evening when the prince heard some conversation coming out of a cave.

He pressed his ears against the cave and heard a feminine voice saying, "Father, I know that nobody can kill you as long as you move about as a boar, but surely you can be killed when you are in your normal form! You have made enemies with so many kings by forcibly dragging away their daughters that they will kill you at the earliest opportunity!"

"Don't you worry, my child. Nobody can kill your father, the great giant Angaraka of whom all are scared. My body is im-

mune to any attack. The only part of it which is vulnerable is my left arm. But I keep it covered with diamond plates and my bow!" replied a male voice.

Prince Mahasena understood that the boar he had met was none other than the notorious giant Angaraka. He waited till it was morning. When Angaraka came out, he challenged him to a fight. His sword struck the giant on his left arm. The giant was killed. Prince Mahasena married the giant's beautiful daughter Angaravati. Thus, by killing the tyrant, he was rewarded.

(Primary Source: *Kathasaritsagara*)



COMPANY OF THE BLESSED

"Viswamitra, I'm lucky to have met you. It is a great privilege to be in the company of the holy," said Sage Vashistha. He then added, "You are rarely seen."

"Yes, I've no time to waste. I devote all my time to austerity and penance," said Viswamitra.

"That's fine. But you should not deprive us of your company. Your company will benefit people," observed Vasistha.

"I don't believe in such things. Only thing that brings any benefit is penance," rebuffed

Viswamitra.

The two sages argued at length, but could not come to any agreement. Which was greater—the benefit that comes from the company of blessed souls or what comes out of severe penance—was the question.

The two sages put the question to Lord Vishnu. "You can get the right answer to your question from Mahashesha," said the Lord.

Now, Mahashesha is the great serpent who holds the Earth on



his head. The sages approached him and put the question to him. He said, "Will one of you relieve me of my burden for a while? I can then calmly reflect on your question and answer you."

Viswamitra went forward to take up the burden. He mustered all the power he had developed through his penance and austerity. He held the Earth all right for a moment, but the very next moment he grimaced and showed as if he was going to be crushed.

Vasistha came to his rescue. He mustered all the power he had through his love for others and others' love for him in the company of sages, devotees and

seekers. He held the Earth without any difficulty.

Mahashesha thanked him and took back his burden. "You have got the answer, haven't you?" he asked them with a smile. "Vasistha's power, obtained through good company, could bear this great burden!" he pointed out.

"But I too had borne it on my head for a moment; then it got imbalanced..." murmured Viswamitra.

"I must tell you a secret. You could hold the Earth for a moment because of the power you had received from Vasistha's company!" explained Mahashesha.



A SECRET REVEALED

Ramsewak and Virdas came to settle down in the bazar more or less at the same time. They were in the same business and they became friends.

But in ten years Virdas grew very prosperous. Ramsewak came to know what a fat amount of money Virdas had put in the bank.

Ramsewak grew curious. What is Virdas's secret? Why can't he too become as rich as Virdas?

He decided to put the question to Virdas, frankly.

It was evening when Ramsewak went to Virdas's house. Virdas had just lighted a lamp. "Come, my friend, come. What brings you here at this hour?" he asked the visitor.

"My brother, I want to have a plain talk with you," said Ramsewak as he sat down on a mat spread for him by his host.

"Plain talk? Good," responded Virdas. He then blowed into the lamp and put the light out.

"Why did you put out the light?" asked Ramsewak.

"My friend, we can talk in darkness, can't we? Why burn the oil unnecessarily?" said Virdas in reply.

At once Ramsewak stood up.

"Why are you going away?" asked a surprised Virdas.

"My brother, I have got the answer to the question I had in my mind. Thank you," replied Ramsewak as he went out.



ELAND

The largest of the antelopes, can leap like race horses and may be easily domesticated!

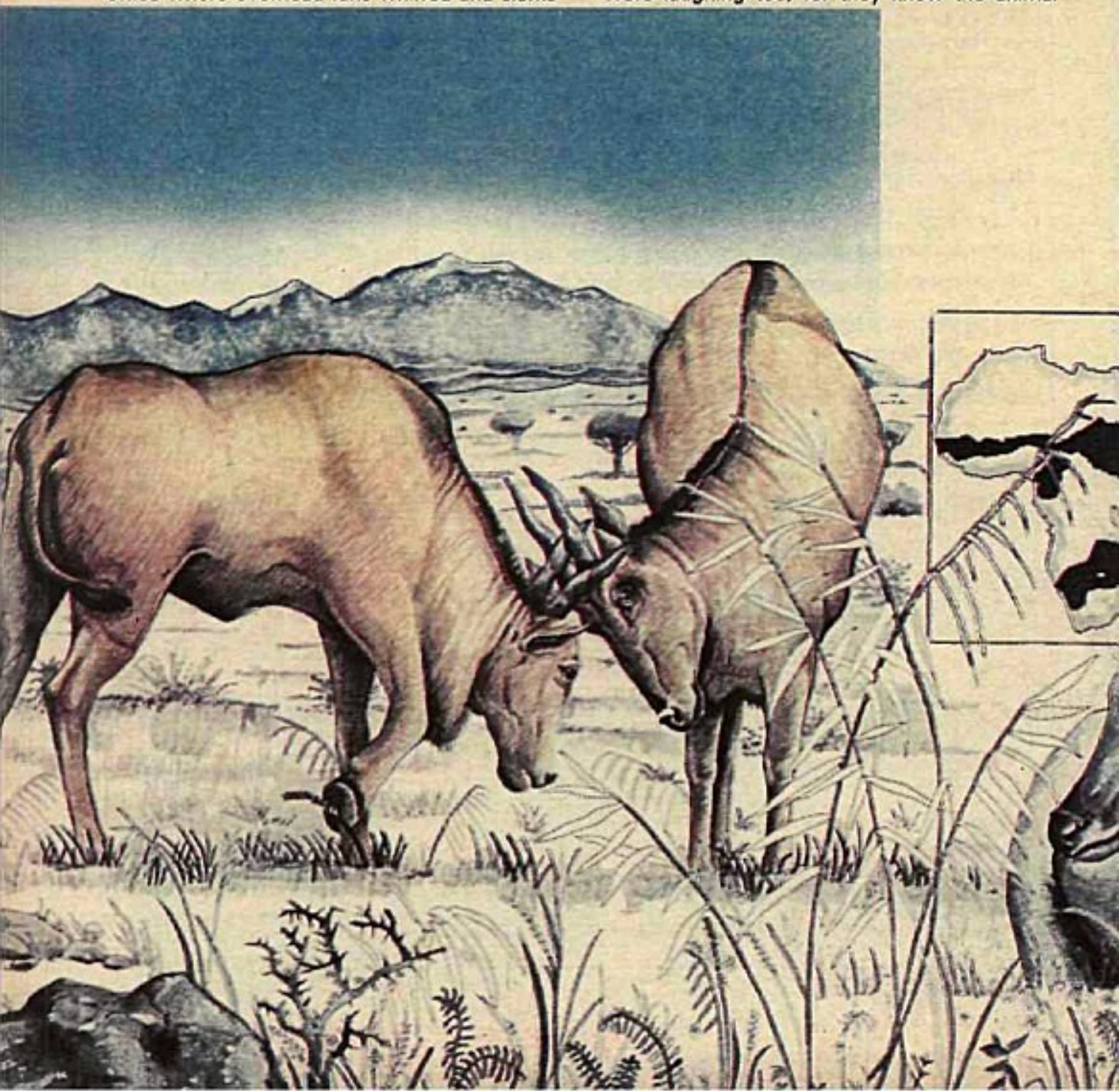
BRISKLY, the District Commissioner in Uganda, in the days of British rule, walked into his office where overhead fans whirled and clerks

toiled away at their desks.

Piled in the man's in-tray were a lot of papers which the clerks had prepared for their officer's approval.

But before the man could so much as glance at them, a strange thing happened. An antelope with twisted horns like a corkscrew began to chew the papers on which the clerks had worked so long.

With a laugh, the District Commissioner bundled the animal out; and soon the clerks were laughing too, for they knew the animal



well. It was an eland, the largest of the antelopes, which can easily be domesticated and soon becomes a pet. This one had been brought up by the District Commissioner since it had been a calf and regularly followed him to work.

Elands are generally found in Africa's desert country and in wooded districts both hilly and flat. There are many of them in Malawi. Their favourite haunts are in undulating well-timbered country where the grass is not too long and where there are intervening open plains.

As a rule, they visit the plains at night or in the early morning to drink at the pools, and then wander back long distances to the forest, where they spend the hot hours of the day.

Large Herds

In the Kalahari desert, on the west of South Africa, they go for a long time without drinking water, except that which they obtain by eating water melons and other plants.

They are found in large herds numbering from fifty upwards to a hundred, but solitary bulls or small parties of bulls are sometimes seen.

Normally, the eland is a timid creature. But when it is hunted it shows another side of its character. If there are calves with the herd, the cows will attack their pursuers and use their sharp horns as weapons in their defence.

But then the eland is quite a surprising animal. It is large and heavy and runs slowly compared to the other animals in the bush. However, it is surprisingly agile and can leap very high in the air. It can easily jump over a two metre fence.

One of the most exciting things to be seen in Africa is the spectacle of a party of elands leaping over a clump of trees as if they were race horses in the Grand National. They can also leap wide gulleys.

The calves are born in July and August, but as the females do not breed oftener than once in every two years, the rate of increase is slow. This, added to the fact that the eland is hunted for its meat, has led to a reduction in its numbers.

However, it still persists from south-central to southern Africa, where it is recognised by its spiral horns, a loose flap of skin dropping from the neck called a dewlap, a tuft of long hair on the forehead and humped shoulders. Its long tail is ox-like and it has a tuft at the end. It is a browser and its size enables it to eat bushes and trees. To collect twigs, it twists its heavy horns in them and breaks them off. It also uses its hooves to dig for bulbs and tubers.

Elands that live in the southern part of Africa have a tuft or "bush" of long, dark brown hair covering the forehead, but the colour of the rest of the body varies from pale fawn to bluish grey, the blue tint being most marked in old individuals—more especially bulls, in which, owing to the scantiness of the hair, the colour of the skin shows through.

In the southern part of its range the eland is uniformly coloured, but farther north there is a race, *T. oryx livingstonei*, in which the body is marked with a number of vertical white stripes and a dark patch on the inner side of the knee, which seems to disappear at a certain age.

Still farther north, elands show an imperfect white chevron on the face and a smaller, lighter coloured "brush" on the forehead.

Considerable variation, partly due to differences of age, occurs among elands of the same herd. Among a single troop, individuals may be seen varying from light tawny yellow to slaty blue in very old age. In some, the stripes are clearly defined, in some only faintly and in others not distinguishable at all.

Elands were once found over all of southern and eastern Africa, but they have since disappeared from many places due to the loss of their habitat and hunting. However, they are useful to man, providing him with milk as well as meat—assets which may do much to prolong the survival of this intelligent and adaptable animal.





A BETTER JUDGMENT

In the court of King Narasimha lived two poets. They were Sukhvir and Bhavin. Sukhvir, the older of the two, had already established himself as a poet of skill. The younger one had however just begun to be recognised by the people.

Being a great lover of poetry King Narasimha attracted many a poet from far and near. The king wanted to appoint a court-poet who could advise him on the merits of any visiting poet to his court.

On being asked about the problem, his minister advised the king, "Maharaj, why do you have to think of someone else when we have Sukhvir in our court? He could be appointed as the court-poet!"

The king acknowledged his suggestion.

Soon after, a poet from the neighbouring city visited King Narasimha.

"Maharaj," said the poet in all humility, "Here is my first work of poetry. I offer it to you. Please accept it."

"Leave your poems with me and meet me after a week," said the king.

Arrangements were made for the stay of the poet.

Next day, the king called Sukhvir and said, "Here are some poems. Read them and give me your opinion."

After a day Sukhvir returned to the king and said, "Maharaj, although it is his first attempt, I have not been able to find a

single mistake in his verse.”
Next day the king asked Bhavin to give his opinion about the verses.

Bhavin reported after two days, “Maharaj, I’ve read these poems and I’m pleasantly surprised at not only the infallible language but also at the deep emotion and thought that they contain. The poet seems to be having a deeper contact with Nature.”

The day after, the king told the minister, “I’ve decided to appoint Bhavin as the court-poet. Make arrangements for the Investiture Ceremony.”

The Minister was shocked.

“Maharaj, I do not doubt your decision or your judgment, but, don’t you think that Sukhvir and the courtiers may criticize this step?”

“You have heard the comments of both the poets, haven’t you?” replied the king. “Sukhvir has only found out what the verses do not have. Whereas Bhavin has observed that the verses had so many merits. Don’t you think that Bhavin’s is the correct way of judging and encouraging the poets in our kingdom?”

The minister felt happy and welcomed the decision without further reservations.



A WISE SELECTION

Natwar belonged to Rangpur, the biggest village in the kingdom of Surajnagar.

He was notorious for inciting quarrel among the villagers. "Don't worry, I will advise you how to proceed in the matter," he would tell each of the quarrelling parties, privately, and inspire them to go to the court.

The leading villagers went to consult Sadhu Singh, an honest and widely respected landlord.

"Well, elect Natwar by all means!" he said.

"What! Natwar of all persons!" exclaimed the villagers in disbelief.

"Yes, we must send Natwar to the council. This will do our village much good!" Sadhu Singh said confidently.

The villagers had great faith in Sadhu Singh. They sent Natwar to the council.

In a few months they realised the benefit of Natwar's absence from the village. There was no quarrel, no new cases went to the court. Peace prevailed in the village after many years.





**New Tales of King
Vikram and the Vampire**

MISPLACED COMPASSION?

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At intervals of thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O King, what do you lack that you are undertaking such painful and risky tasks at night? You must be doing this out of kindness or pity for somebody. The question is, are you sure of that person deserving your sympathy? Know, O King, that to bestow kindness on one who does not deserve it is foolishness. Let me give an illustra-



tion to you. Pay attention to it. That might bring you some relief."

The vampire went on: Years ago there lived a wealthy man named Ramchandra Roy, in a village that was not far from the city of Subhadra. Roy was an extremely kind-hearted man, so much so that he did good even to those who harmed him.

A boy named Suresh lived in Roy's house. An orphan, he had been adopted by an old servant of Roy's household. The old servant was no more. Suresh continued to live there. In fact, he was more dear to Roy than any other servant of the house-

hold.

Suresh grew up to be a young man. Roy built a small house for him in a corner of his compound. He also arranged for the young man's marriage. Suresh continued to work for Roy.

The young man was never tired of praising Roy before his wife. At first his wife kept listening to him without murmur. But one day she said, "Why do you go on praising your master? Has he given you any higher status than that of a mere servant?"

The comment stunned Suresh. He said after a moment, "What do you mean? Roy Sahib never deals with me as he should deal with a servant! He looks upon me as his son!"

"Son! Tut, tut! What a pampered son! A glance at your clothes and those of your wife will convince anybody that you were the wealthy man's heir! Does not your wife put on Benarasi silk saree, gold bangles and diamond-studded necklace?" retorted his wife.

"Well, I receive much more from Roy Sahib than what I deserve for my service," mumbled Suresh.

"You receive much more, do

you? Surely, you have got a hut, after all! Look here, if you wish to prosper in life, you have to be smart and daring. Become independent of Roy Sahib and start your own business," advised the lady.

"Where to find money for my own business?" asked Suresh.

"Listen to me," said his wife in a low tone. "Pick up some money from Roy Sahib's treasury. He is so rich that it will not make any difference to him. On the other hand our fortune will change."

"Do you ask me to steal?" asked Suresh, taken aback.

"Why should you consider picking up some money as stealing?"

"Please don't say any such thing. I can never betray his faith," said Suresh, a little irritated.

"This is not betraying his faith. When we have earned enough investing his capital, we can return his money to him with interest," said the lady.

Suresh rejected the suggestion that day. But as days passed, the idea took roots in his mind. One night when all the members of Roy's family were witnessing a drama in their out-



er courtyard, Suresh entered Roy's bed-room and tried to open the safes. He managed to open one. Inside it he found a bag filled with coins. He picked it up and went to his hut. With great excitement he and his wife counted the coins. They amounted to two thousand and five hundred rupees!

Suresh felt unhappy over his own action, but his wife was all joy!

They decided to leave for the town, but not immediately, for any hurry might arouse suspicion in others.

But the theft was discovered the very next day. Roy called all

his employees and said, "I have never done any injustice towards any of you. Who among you could be so heartless to steal from me?"

He did not say anything more. His employees proposed to search their own houses, one after another, in the presence of all of them. Suresh could not agree with the move, but nobody cared for his objection. They first proceeded to search his house.

They discovered the stolen money-bag within minutes and restored it to Roy.

Roy was surprised. He called Suresh and asked, "My boy,

what did you propose to do with this money?"

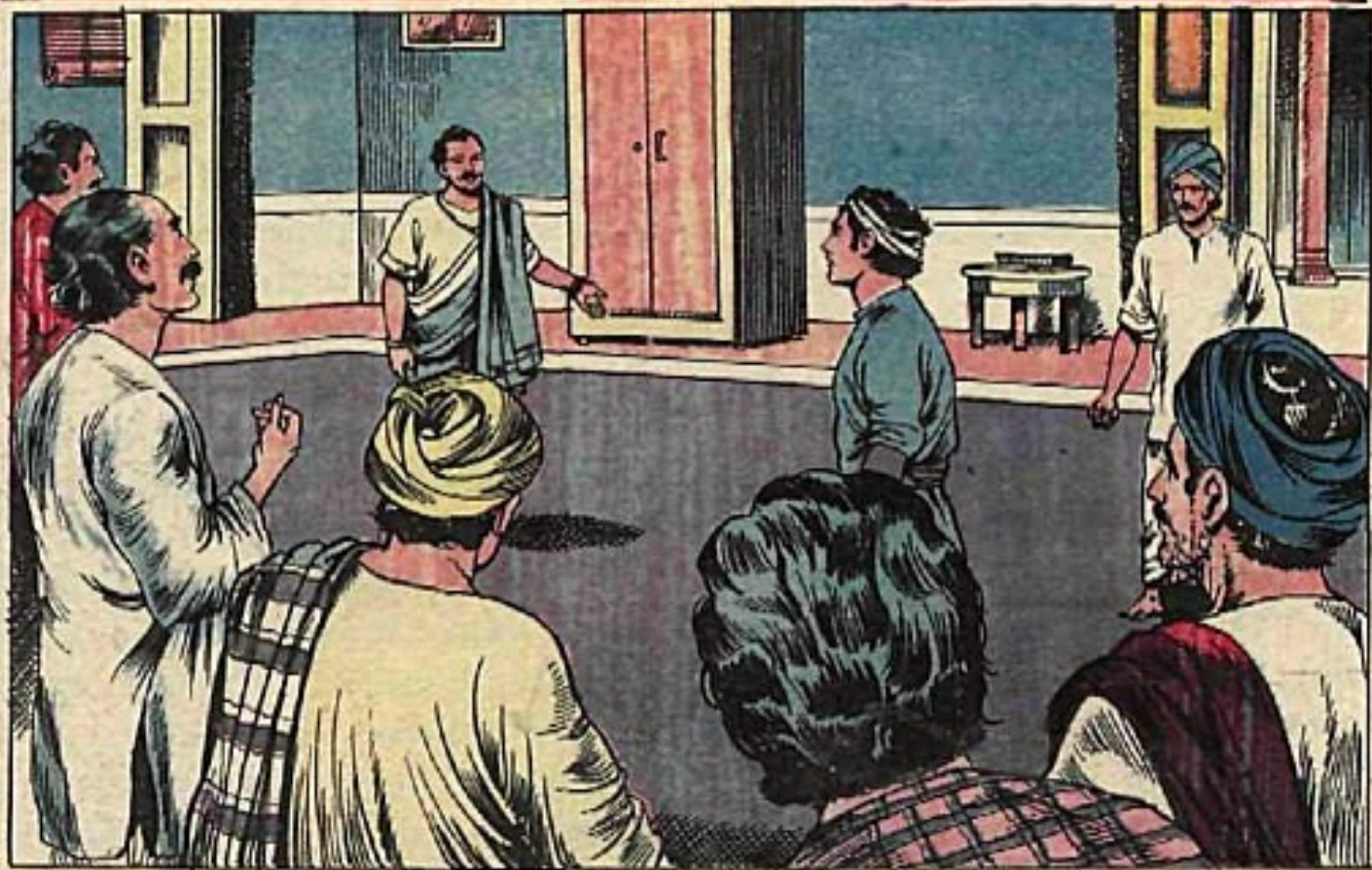
Suresh wept and said that he wished to go over to the city and start a business.

"I don't think you can succeed in business. Better be here," suggested Roy.

"No, sir. Please allow me to leave this place. Others should not think that one can steal from you and yet continue to be in your house!" said Suresh.

"Well, I don't wish to stop you from going your way!" said Roy and he handed over the money-bag to Suresh.

Suresh left the village the same day. Years passed. Roy



grew old. One night a thief entered his house. Some servants could mark his stealthy movements. They caught hold of him. He was a boy of seventeen.

He was produced before Roy. He wept. Roy asked others to leave. Then he asked the boy, "Who are you?"

"Sir, do you remember one Suresh? I'm his son," said the boy, wiping his eyes.

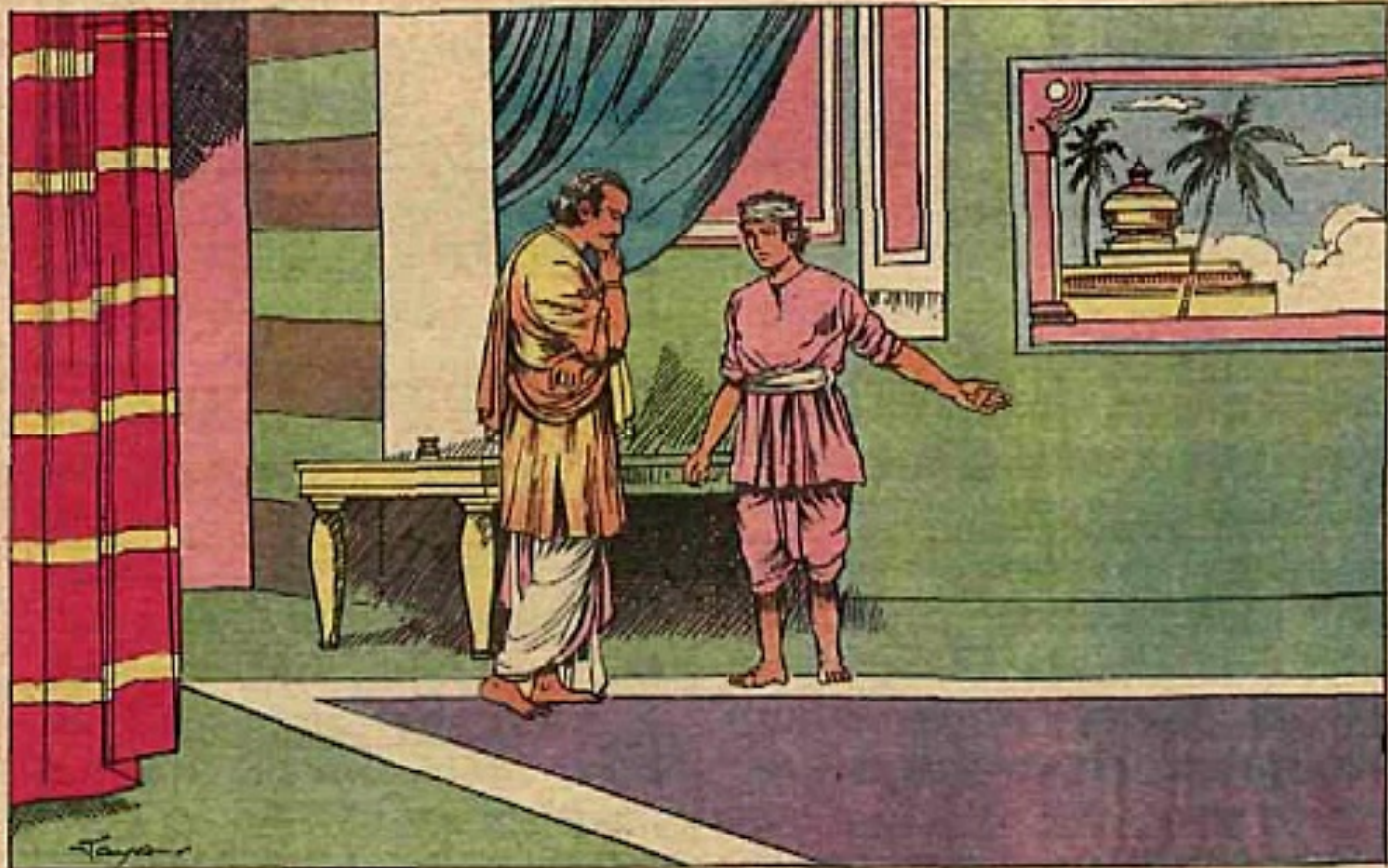
The old Roy kept staring at the boy for some time. Then he began to question the boy. The boy narrated how his father had failed in every business in which he tried his hand. For the last

one year he was bed-ridden. When his wife instigated their son to steal, he protested. At last he had to fall silent because they had nothing to eat for two days.

As the son was ready to go out for stealing, Suresh told him, "My son, if steal you must, then try to steal from the house of Ramachandra Roy!"

The boy, obeying his father's direction, was trying to steal from Roy's house.

Roy detained the boy for the night and fed him. Early in the morning he accompanied the boy to Suresh's house and arranged for Suresh's treat-





ment. Also, he gave a job to Suresh's son.

The vampire paused for a moment. Then, in a challenging tone, he asked King Vikram, "O King, don't you know that Roy was eccentric? If he was so fond of Suresh, why did he let him move to the town? Then, how could Suresh be so ungrateful as to send his son to steal from Roy's house? After such wicked conduct of Suresh, why did Roy go to help him? Was it not a kind of weakness on his part? Answer me, O King, if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll of

your neck!"

King Vikram answered forthwith: "Far from being weak, Ramchandra Roy was exceptionally noble and generous. He allowed Suresh to go away, because Suresh would have been looked down upon by other servants for his treachery towards his kind-hearted master. So, it is out of his love for Suresh that he allowed him to go away—with that stolen money.

"Suresh never wanted his son to become a thief. But since he lay bed-ridden, he had no control over his family. When he knew that his son cannot be stopped from going out on his despicable mission, he advised him to go to Roy's house. It was because he feared that his inexperienced son would be caught. In that case, Roy will not let the boy be beaten up. In other words, his advising the boy to steal from Roy's house was a proof of his faith in Roy's nobleness.

"Roy understood very well that Suresh was a good man: somebody else's influence had pushed him along a wrong path. Roy's efforts to cure him of his illness speaks of Roy's innate



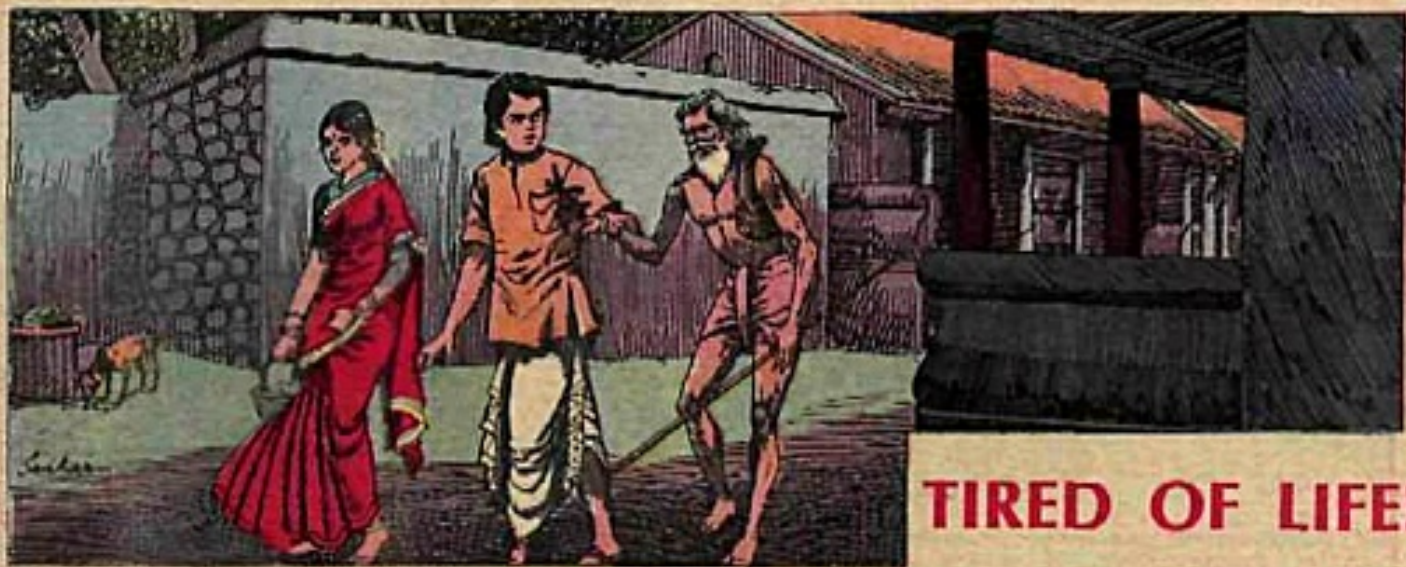
goodness. Impelled by the same goodness Roy gave a job to Suresh's son. Unfortunate circumstances had made the boy a thief. Better circumstance should make a good man out of

him."

No sooner had the king concluded his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.

WONDER WITH COLOURS





TIRED OF LIFE!

Raghu was a very shy person. Even though he had lived in the rented house in the town for six months, he had acquired hardly any friends. He led a very lonely life.

When he got married and brought his wife home, he discovered that she too was a timid person. The day after their marriage, when the couple sat for lunch, there was hardly any food on the table. Unable to scold his wife, he said meekly, "As you are new to this house, you must be finding it difficult to cook. For some days we shall get our food from the nearby hotel." Not only wanting to tell the truth that there were not sufficient provisions at home, the wife replied sweetly, "Do not bother. If there are all the provisions at home, I shall cook right from tomorrow. It will be

my pleasure to do so."

Days passed into weeks and still the couple had not become free with each other. They continued to be shy.

One day, as they were returning from a temple, they were stopped by an old man who cried out, "Sir, have mercy upon me. I can hardly see the road; will you not hold my hand and help me reach my hut?"

Even before Raghu could respond, the old man had caught his shoulder and started walking.

Just then, Sudhir, a braggart in the town happened to pass by. Pretending generosity, he told Raghu, "Hello! Judging from your clothes you seem to be a rich man. But, is it proper to pull along an old father like that? Can't you take him in a bullock-cart?"

Raghu was about to clarify the situation, when Sudhir called up a cart-man and said, "Father, get into this cart and go home. Your son does not seem to be a thoughtful man." So saying, Sudhir went away thinking that he had shown a great gesture of generosity.

The couple kept staring at the cart and the old man inside it. The cart-man shouted, "Sir, how long shall I wait for you? I have work to do. Hurry up!"

Even before they could realize what was happening, the couple along with the old man had reached the house.

At home the old man complained of giddiness. A doctor was called. All care was taken of the guest. Within a week, the old man was back on his feet, all hale and healthy. He even looked younger than what he had looked a week before.

One day, in the second week of his stay, Rohini served him the usual food and stood silently in attendance.

"Rohini, what kind of food is this?" shouted the old man. "Now, I am perfectly all right and I need normal food and sweetmeats!"

In the evening when Rohini



reported this to Raghu, he was surprised. He said, "Rohini, tomorrow, when he comes for lunch, tell him to leave our house."

Timid as they were, neither of them would tell the old man to leave their house. One day, as they were discussing the problem, the old man rushed into their room and said with a taunt, "It is all your fault. Why did you bring me here and save my life?" It would have been better if I were left to die on the road than to live this tormenting life in your house! Here I am not even fed two square meals a day!"



"Sir, there has not been a single day when you were not fed properly," protested Rohini meekly.

"Secondly, if you ask me to leave the house I shall do so by drowning myself in your well. That way even after my death I shall continue to bother you," threatened the old man and left the room.

Days passed and the troubled couple could not think of a way to get rid of the strong old man. However, one evening Raghu struck upon an idea. He went to the unwanted guest and said, "Tomorrow we shall be going to a neighbouring village to attend

the marriage of a cousin of mine. We will be back only after five days. So, it might be difficult for you to continue to stay in our house."

"No, no, don't worry about me or my food. Just see that you leave enough kitchen provisions and I shall cook my own food," replied the old man, very casually. "I shall even look after your house."

His plan to drive out the wretched old man failed. And yet, in order to keep to their word, the couple went the next morning to a relative's house in the same town and spent there some days.

After a couple of days, Rohini's childhood friend Yamini came to visit them. As they met after many years, they sat down comfortably and started exchanging information regarding each other.

They hardly realised the passing of time.

"Rohini!" suddenly the old man burst into their conversation, "how long will you chatter with your friend? Have you prepared my lunch? What a wretched place is this? I'm fed up with this house!"

Silently, Rohini got up and started preparing the lunch.

"Rohini," asked Yamini, "your father-in-law seems to be a very angry man whereas your husband seems to be a very quiet person. How is it?"

"Yamini, this old man is not my father-in-law. He's a curse to us," said Rohini. And, she narrated to her friend the sad story of their harassment.

After listening to her friend, Yamini said, "Listen Rohini, I've a plan. You have only to say yes to my questions."

Soon, they heard the old man coming towards the kitchen.

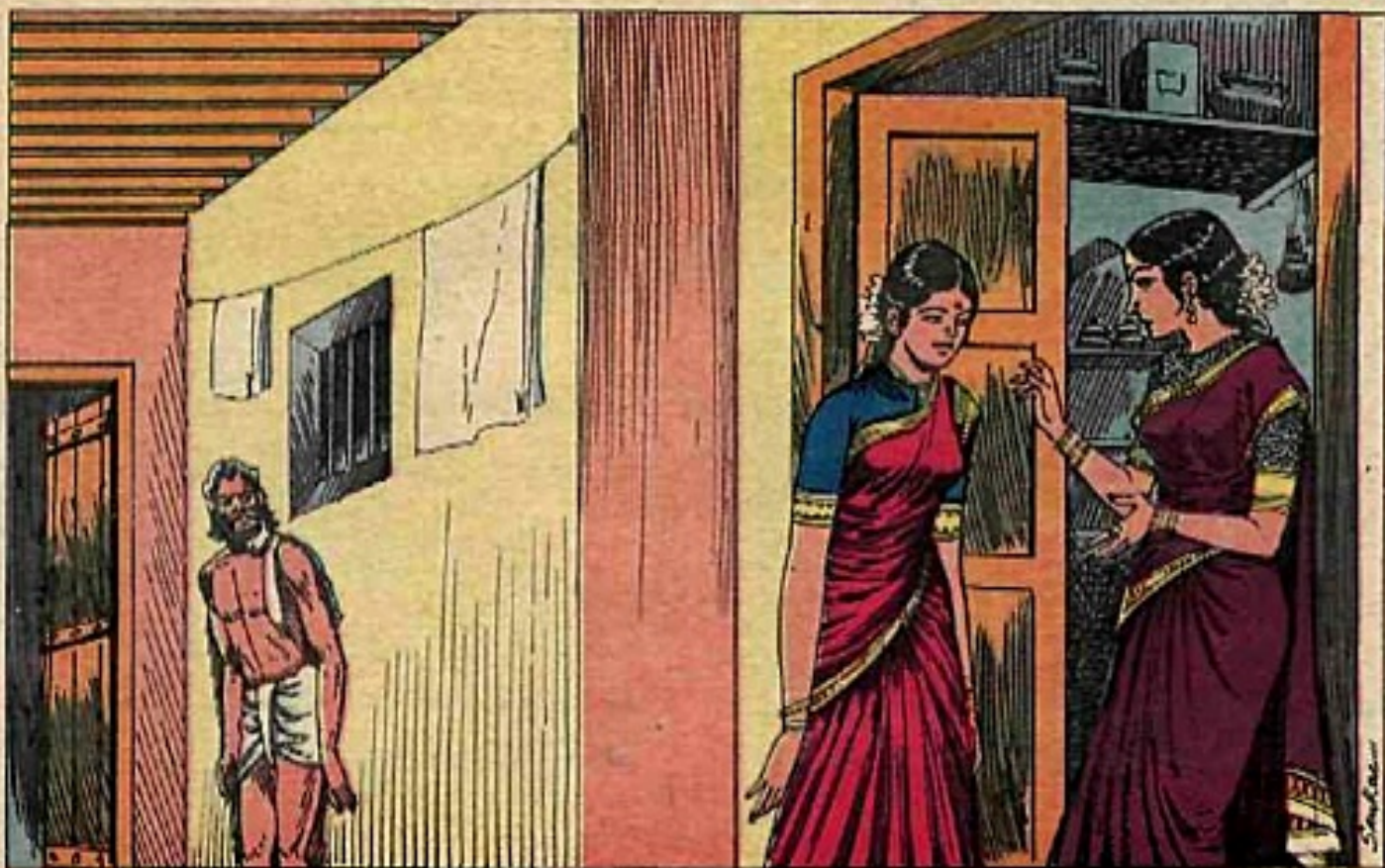
"Rohini, you said that your

old guest is a very noble man but a little disgusted with this life, is that so?" asked Yamini.

"Yes, Yamini," replied Rohini.

"Then, I will tell you the secret of how to let the old man have a peaceful departure from the earth, which, he surely deserves. My great grandfather has left with us a certain powder, prepared out of some magic seeds. When it is added with water and taken it brings a very peaceful state to the taker. One passes away in that great peace. It is not poison, but a blessing."

The old man who overheard all this conversation, suddenly





ran across the verandah shouting, "Rohini, I am leaving the house. I can't stay here for a single minute more."

"No, don't go without taking your lunch," said Rohini, running after him. "At least take some cool water!"

"No, I've no time to waste. My son has sent word, I must return home."

The friends had a good laugh. Later, when Raghu came to know of the incident he felt extremely relieved.

SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES





TEMPLES OF INDIA

AMARNATH

One day Goddess Parvati asked Lord Siva, "Why do you sometimes put on a garland with a skull?" The smiling Siva explained that the skull belonged to Parvati herself—of her earlier incarnation.

"Why did I die while you did not?" asked Parvati.

Siva was willing to speak to Parvati on the mystery of life and death provided they found a place where no living creature—not even an insect—was present to hear them. Siva's spirit-servants scattered in all directions to find such a place.



At last they chose a cave in the Himalaya. Situated amidst miles and miles of desolation, there was no sign of life anywhere near it. Siva and Parvati arrived there and Siva began narrating the secret lore, both seated inside the cave.



At one point Siva realised that Parvati had fallen asleep, but someone else was responding to His narration. He was surprised. He woke up Parvati and began to look for the creature that heard him and responded to him!

Suddenly a tiny parrot flapped out of a hole under the rock on which they sat. It was lying there as an egg, but had come out of its shell and was listening to the secret lore. It flew away, followed by Siva.



Far away, in front of the hut of Sage Vyasa, sat the sage's wife combing her hair. The parrot merged in her. In course of time it was to be born as her child—to become the renowned sage, Sukadeva.

Siva saw the bird disappearing and went back. However, the cave inside which he had narrated the secret lore became a highly sacred spot. Centuries passed. One day a young shepherd ran after one of his frolicking lambs.



Suddenly he reached the cave and was amazed to see the symbol of Siva formed inside it. He also felt a great peace and his heart was filled with devotion. He went back and informed the King of Kashmir about his discovery.

The King of Kashmir visited the place. Sages living in the Himalaya told him that the cave was the sacred spot of legends—the spot where Siva had narrated the mystery of life and death to Parvati. They advised the King to leave the place under Nature's care.





Pilgrims gather at Pahalgam in August, ready for trekking 46 km. to the cave. The head of the Dharmarth Sangh, a religious institution of Kashmir, begins leading them towards the cave at an auspicious moment, carrying a silver staff.

The procession wends its way through one of the most beautiful mountain regions of the world. It may take three to five days to reach the destination, passing by enchanting lakes, streams and valleys.



They witness the divine sight of the Symbol of Siva formed by Nature out of icicles. It is said that Sage Vrigu was the first human being to see the sight. Since then thousands of pilgrims of every generation visit the holy Amarnath.



IN PRAISE OF ONESELF

In a village lived Govind, a farmer's son. He was handsome and intelligent, but, he was extremely lazy. The only thing he loved to do was while away his time with his friends. He came home only for eating and sleeping. His parents' advice fell on deaf ears.

One day, Rajaram a childhood friend of his father, came to their house. The two friends were very happy to see each other. Rajaram agreed to his friend's request to stay on for a few days.

As days went by, Rajaram noticed that Govind was hardly to be seen at home. On enquiry he found out from his friend, about Govind's idle habits. He called up the young man one morning and said, "Govind, for the past few days I have been hearing complaints about you

from your parents as well as your friends. No one seems to respect you..."

"My parents may say so," replied Govind, "but, my friends will never back-bite!"

"If you think your friends are true to you, then just do what I say — you'll yourself come to know their true attitude to you," advised Rajaram. "You begin praising yourself before your friends. Tell them about all your merits and virtues. Do that for a few days and see what happens."

Govind did accordingly. In the beginning his friends took Govind's self-praises as something amusing. Soon, when they realised that Govind only praised himself and never cared for their good deeds, they started deserting him.

"This fellow has become blind



with pride," they said.

When the last of the friends deserted him, Govind reported to Rajaram all that had happened with his friends.

"Had I not told you already that your friends are not your true well-wishers? They were taking advantage of your goodness. They became jealous of you and they couldn't stand you any more." said Rajaram.

"What must I do now?" asked Govind.

"I want you to behave the same way with your parents. But, you should now do it in a more refined manner. For that you need to read some literary

works in which you'll learn better ways of praising yourself," advised Rajaram.

As Govind had come to like self-praise, he started reading good books. Soon, he learnt better phrases, better idioms which he put into use in his self-praise. In the beginning, his parents did not mind it. But, there is a limit to everything!

One day Govind's mother told his father, "I am quite tired of Govind's self-trumpeting. Why can't you think of a way out of this?"

"The only way, I suppose, is to get him married. He has now fallen in love with himself and it is best to divert his self-love towards his wife," observed Govind's father.

But search as they would, no parents were ready to give their daughter to Govind who was supposed to be bone lazy.

After a few months when Rajaram returned to his friend's house, he came to know of their problem and he said, "If you are agreeable I am ready to give my daughter Padmavati to Govind in marriage."

Govind's parents were surprised and delighted.

"But, there is one thing: my

daughter does not believe in Gods. So, if you don't mind that..." continued Rajaram.

"Not at all," replied the father, eager not to lose an opportunity.

Govind's marriage was celebrated and Padmavati came to live in the family.

Soon enough, Govind started his old practice of self-glorification before his wife. It had become almost a natural part of his behaviour. The wife soon got tired of his habit and she looked for some activity for herself when she could be left alone. She observed that such an activity was prayer and meditation during which Govind did not torment her with his boasting.

Padmavati soon began sitting for worshipping the family deity. She feigned sitting for meditation. She started reading scriptures. Soon she became a real devotee of the deity. When her father returned after a few months, he was very happy to see a changed daughter. But, he was sorry to see that Govind had gone from bad to worse in his self-praise.

"Govind," said Rajaram one day, "you seem to have alien-



ated yourself from your friends, your parents and your wife too, by your constant self-praise."

"But, that's what you'd asked me to do!" argued Govind.

"I'd asked you to do it only for a while in order to test your friends. Now, in order to get them back, you start praising them instead of yourself," advised Rajaram.

Govind, as always, put Rajaram's advice once again into practice. One by one, he got back his friends, who found his words very sweet. He regained the sympathy of his parents and the respect of his wife. But, trying to praise others was not a



very comfortable practice for Govind. He was used to self-praise and not to flattering others.

So, one day, he realised that the best way to keep away from all that was to do some work

and thereby avoid other's company. Soon, he took up work in his father's fields.

Good work and less talk, either in self-praise or in flattering others, kept Govind happier and the family at peace.



The physician had sent his assistant to the market to buy tea. The boy returned empty-handed. "Sir," he reported, "you instructed me to buy a packet of 500 grammes of tea. But there were only 250-gramme-packets available."

"Fool! Don't you know that two such packets will make 500 grammes?" the physician chided the assistant.

Days passed. The physician had numbered his medicines and had taught his assistant to give to his patients accordingly. "Did you give medicine No. 5 to him?" he asked the assistant, showing a patient who was departing.

"Of course I did, but in a different way. Medicine No. 5 had been exhausted. So, I gave him No. 2 and No. 3. Together they make No. 5. Don't they?" smartly replied the assistant.



HOW MANY CROWS?

One day Maharaja Indrasen was relaxing with his queen and listening to songs sung by a companion of the queen. Suddenly, a crow flew into the chamber. Its sudden intrusion disturbed the quiet mood of the king. "Oh! What a nuisance are these crows," said the king, a bit annoyed when he met the chief minister outside the apartment.

The chief minister felt embarrassed and decided to do something about the crow-menace. He sent immediately a circular calling his ministers to a special meeting.

The ministers and their aides rushed to the chief minister's chamber.

"I have called for this urgent meeting," said the chief minister, "because I want an immediate solution to a grave problem: Yesterday, our Maharaja was

bothered by a crow. We have to find a solution to the crow-menace."

"The only way to save the Maharaja of this problem is to get rid of all the crows," suggested a senior minister.

"That would not be correct," said another old minister. "The crows help us in many ways in our daily life and we need to keep them for our own good."

"Let's not kill all the crows; let's keep only a few—as many as are necessary to keep our roads clean of the dead rats and insects," suggested a middle-aged minister.

"Before we can decide as to how many to be killed, we need to know the number of crows in our kingdom," said a new recruit.

"That's it!" said the chief minister. "Let us issue circulars

to our different department heads and their zonal branches asking them to send us full records of crows in their areas."

And the emergency meeting was over.

Soon, every officer in the kingdom was seen on the roads, on tree-tops, or on roof-tops trying to count crows.

One day, Mukesh, a young man of the kingdom walked into the king's court and declared, "Maharaja, I am a ceaseless traveller, who has gone around your kingdom many times visiting places and talking to your citizens. I've found out the number of crows in your kingdom."

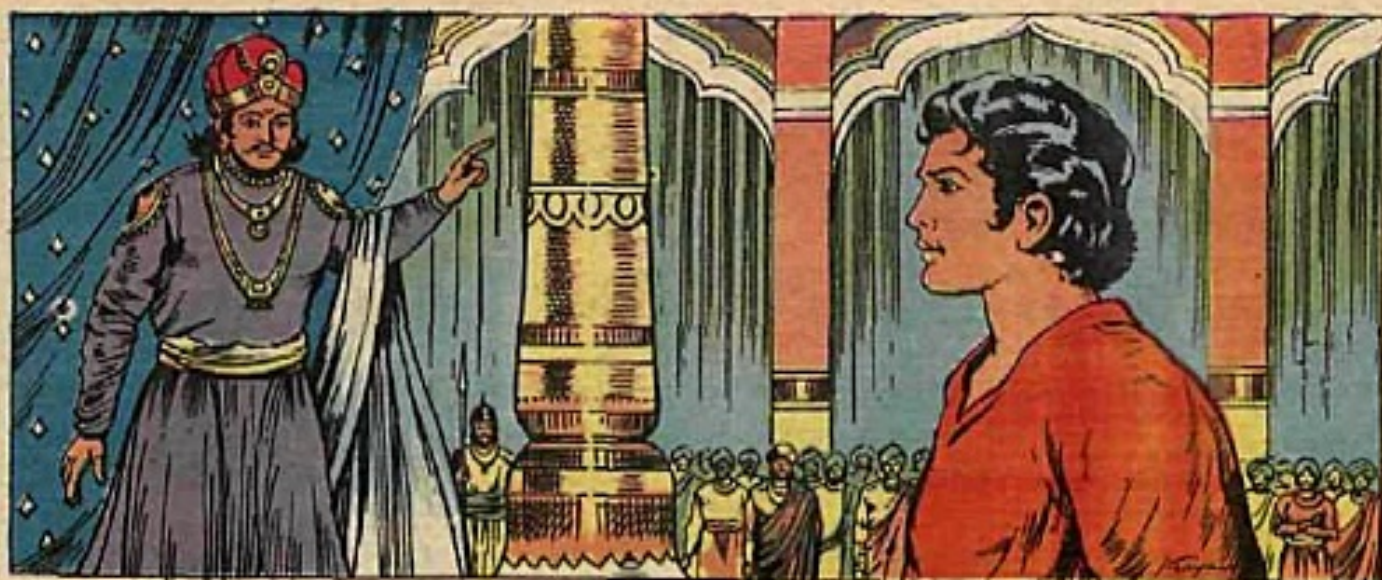
"What crows are you talking about?" asked the king, quite surprised.

"Well, Maharaja, here is a circular that I came upon—it is from your chief minister who has asked his officers to find out the total number of crows in your kingdom. There were till last night 1,54,356 crows in your kingdom," explained Mukesh.

The chief minister came forward and challenged, "How are you sure that there aren't any less or more than 1,54,356?"

"It is for you to prove that I'm incorrect!" retorted the young man. "There is a possibility that some hundreds would have





gone away from the kingdom or a few thousand might have come to the kingdom by the time you finish counting them," said Mukesh.

"How is it that more crows will come to our kingdom?" asked the king, a little curious.

"In order to enjoy the company of your lazy officers, who seem to have nothing better to do than to count crows," replied Mukesh. "In the neighbouring kingdom, the ministers and officers are busy helping their people and developing new schemes to bring prosperity to their kingdom. In your kingdom, there are many places where people do not even have

sufficient water to drink or good enough shelters, yet nothing is being done to improve the situation. I do not know if your ministers are even letting you know of the real problems of your kingdom," explained Mukesh.

The king realised his own mistake in depending entirely upon his ministers. He then said, "Young man, I am very pleased with your keen intelligence and your sympathetic outlook. I appoint you right away as one of my counsellors and ask you to look into the welfare of my people."

The ministers felt ashamed and hung their heads.

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"Reena, where is my copy of the *Run*?" asked an agitated Rajesh.

"The *Run*? What's that?"

"Why, haven't you seen it? It is the latest Sport magazine!" said Rajesh with the pride of one who knew better than his sister.

"Don't call it a Sport magazine. Call it Sports magazine," said Reena politely.

"Ha ha!" the laughing Rajesh said, "I knew, you too, like anybody else, will make this mistake. Look here, Reena, the term 'Sport' refers to athletics only. 'Sport' means racing, hunting, cricket, football as well as the other outdoor games. The *Run* is a magazine devoted to sport. I know better than you do."

"You don't, I'm afraid."

Rajesh looked over his shoulder at the comment. Grandpa Chowdhury had just entered the room. "Rajesh, your argument is quite logical. But usage and logic do not always go together. 'Sport' becomes 'Sports' when used as an adjective. So we have 'Sports magazines' and not 'Sport magazines'. Right?"

"I see. Very well, Reena, you know better than I do!" conceded Rajesh.

"It is quite sportsmanlike of you to admit it, Rajesh!" said a beaming Reena.



DID YOU KNOW?



Gama of India, the greatest wrestler of all times, threw a challenge in 1910, in London, that let 20 best Western wrestlers join him in combat. He will throw them all within one hour. No British wrestler dared to come forward. The famous Spanish wrestler Stanislaus Zbyszko, who accepted his challenge, lasted only half a minute.

The African Baobab tree is not very tall, but its trunk can develop to a diameter of 35 feet. It is quite soft. So the natives can dig out a cave-like room—sometimes even a two room apartment—in its trunk and live inside it.



Hetty Green of New Bedford, Massachusetts, was perhaps the greatest miser, though miserliness is a relative term. She had property worth 125 million dollars in 19th century, but she lived on a diet of onions and cold eggs, in order to save the cost of heating the eggs, in order to save the cost of heating the food. The most fantastic example of her niggardliness was to be seen from the fact that she only ironed the lower half of her petticoat to save the cost of ironing the full petticoat.

The great Roman poet Virgil (17 B.C. to 19 B.C.), author of the *Aeneid*, was a strange character. Once when the Government decided to forfeit unused lands of the wealthy people, except those which had tombs on them, Virgil buried a fly on a piece of land, declaring that the fly was as close to him as a dear relative. Orations were delivered at the fly's funeral, extolling the virtues and the rites cost 800,000 sesterces, the equivalent of Rs.1200,000.00.



PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



M. Natarajan



A.L. Syed

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs.50/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

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PICKS FROM THE WISE

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Laugh and the world laughs with you; snore and you sleep alone.

—*Anthony Burgess*

The stars, like measles, fade at last.

—*Samuel Hoffenstein*

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Time has really changed. I remember very well how Mummy used to do all her house-hold work and even then spared time to massage me

Now, Mummy does not have time, as she has to go to many important places like kitty Parties, Social get together etc., so Daddy finds time from his office to do house-hold jobs and massage me too.

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The Maltova Gang springs a surprise...

Yesterday had been Minnie's birthday. The gang sat in her garden, enjoying their cup of Maltova with the leftover cake. What a splendid cake it had been! All chocolate icing and candles. What fun they had "passing the parcel!" And Minnie got such lovely presents. So many too! But the little birthday girl sat quietly.

"What's the matter, Minnie?"

"Daboo, remember Dhiru from the orphanage. Mummy had invited him yesterday. Do you know that he had never been to a birthday party before? They never celebrate birthdays at the orphanage and his is on Saturday." And two big tears rolled down Minnie's cheeks. Everyone was silent. They all knew and liked Dhiru, the little boy who never smiled.

Salim has an idea...

Salim sat up with a mysterious smile. Suppose they had a surprise party for Dhiru. Everyone thought it was a great idea! Daboo had saved some pocket

money and it would come in handy. Venu said his mother could bake a cake. Mali said she would contribute too and Minnie offered some of her presents. The gang was very excited. It was their big, happy secret.

A surprise for Dhiru!

That Saturday, Dhiru was invited to Salim's house. No one had wished him and so he looked very sad. He knocked on the door and found it open. "Hello, where's everyone?" The house was dark. Suddenly the lights came on and there was everyone singing, "Happy Birthday" — all of Dhiru's friends from the orphanage and the Maltova Gang. A big pink and white cake sat on the table.

There were balloons everywhere and hot steaming cups of Maltova. And presents too! You could tell it was a grand party for Dhiru. Because shining through his tears was the biggest smile you ever saw!

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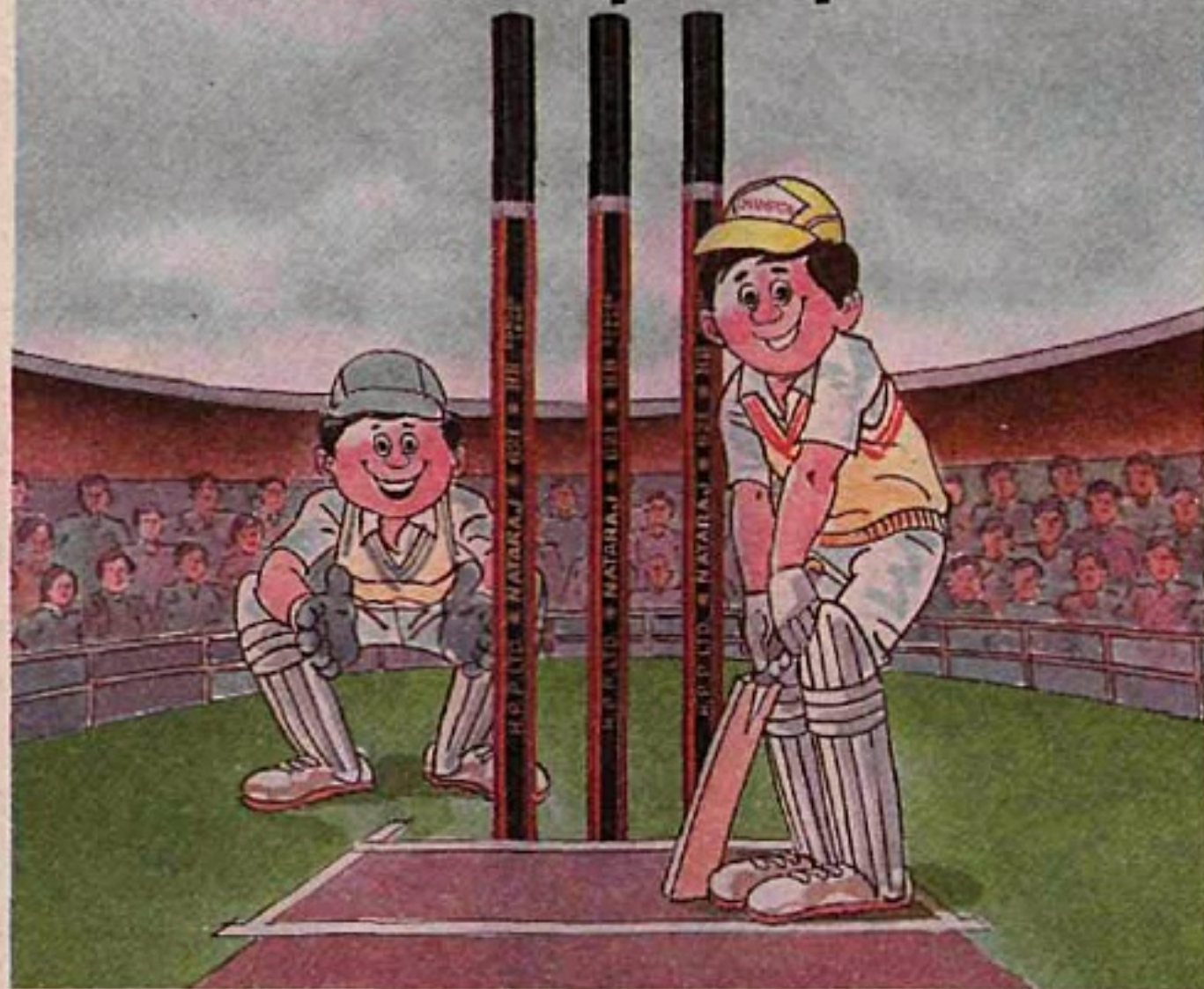
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